

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

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RSR-01 /184 W

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R 190928 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9357

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

USNATO BRUSSELS 2870

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 10855

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: CALL ON PRIME MINISTER MESSMER

1. SUMMARY. DURING FIRST COURTESY CALL, MESSMER NOTED GREAT IMPROVEMENT IN FRANCO- AMERICAN DEFENSE RELATIONS SINCE 1960' S DUE LARGELY TO PRESIDENT NIXON' S ATTITUDE. ON ECONOMIC SIDE, PROBLEMS EXIST. EMPHASIZING IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURE AND CAP TO FRANCE AND EC, MESSMER SAID IT NECESSARY FOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REASONS TO PROTECT FARMERS. IN REPLY, I SAID US DOES NOT SEEK TO DESTROY CAP BUT RATHER BETTER MANAGEMENT SO AS NOT TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST THIRD COUNTRIES. MESSMER WAS SCEPTICAL ABOUT UTILITY OF GATT NEGOTIATIONS UNLESS MONETARY REFORMS AGREED ON AND MONETARY STABILITY REACHED, SINCE MONETARY INSTABILITY COULD QUICKLY UNDO RESULTS. I STRESSED IMPORTANCE IN COMING NEGOTIATIONS OF NOT DAMAGING POLITICAL- PHILOSOPHICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF US- EUROPEAN RELATIONS. END SUMMARY.

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2. DURING INITIAL COURTESY CALL ON PRIME MINISTER, APRIL 16, AFTER CORDIAL WELCOMING REMARKS, HE NOTED

DIFFERENT STATE OF BILATERAL RELATIONS IN DEFENSE AS COMPARED WITH ECONOMIC AREA. ON DEFENSE MATTERS, MESSMER DREW ATTENTION TO SERIOUS MIS- UNDERSTANDINGS AND SHARP DIFFERENCES WHICH EXISTED BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES IN THE EARLY/ MID-1960' S. IN THOSE YEARS, U. S. DID NOT SEEM TO ACCEPT FACT THAT FRANCE COULD HAVE INDEPENDENT DEFENSE OPTIONS. TODAY, HOWEVER, THERE IS A VASTLY IMPROVED CLIMATE IN OUR DEFENSE RELATIONS WHICH, MESSMER EMPHASIZED, WAS DUE LARGELY TO PRESIDENT NIXON' S UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHY FOR FRENCH VIEWS AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. THIS ATTITUDE HAD BEEN NOTICEABLE FROM THE VERY START OF THE PRESIDENT' S ADMINISTRATION IN EARLY 1969.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, ON TRADE AND MONETARY MATTERS FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES HAVE SOME BASIC DIFFERENCES. IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE UNITED STATES TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE TO FRANCE OF AGRICULTURE AND OF THE COMMUNITY' S CAP. AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IS A FUNDAMENTAL ELEMENT IN FRANCE' S ECONOMY, AND THE CAP IS AN ECONOMIC ASSET OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO FRANCE AND THE COMMUNITY. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE EC MAY DIFFER ABOUT THE DETAILS -- E. G. FRANCE WANTS INCREASE IN SUPPORT PRICES FOR MEANT AND DAIRY PRODUCTS WHILE GERMANY PREFERS AN INCREASE IN CEREAL PRICES. HOWEVER, ALL EC MEMBERS, WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF THE UK, AGREE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING THE CAP. IN ADDITION TO ITS ECONOMIC RATIONALE, MESSMER NOTED THE HIGHLY POLITICAL NATURE OF AGRICULTURE AND THE CAP. ALTHOUGH TRUE THAT THE PERCENTAGE OF THE FRENCH POPULATION WORKING IN AGRICULTURE IS CONSTANTLY DIMINISHING, AFRMERS ARE RESPECTED MEMBERS OF FRENCH SOCIETY AND THERE IS COMMON RECOGNITION OF THE NEED TO PROTECT THEM.

4. IN REPLY, I SAID I WAS PLEASED THE PRIME MINISTER HAD BROUGHT UP THIS QUESTION FOR IT GOES TO THE ESSENCE OF WHAT I WISHED TO EMPHASIZE IN MY MISSION TO FRANCE. ADVERTING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF DISPELLING SUSPICIOUS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT EACH OTHER' S PURPOSES, PARTICULARLY IN THE FORTHCOMING TRADE AND MONETARY NEGOTIATIONS, I SAID AGRICULTURE OFFERS A GOOD EXAMPLE. THE UNITED STATES AND  
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FRANCE DO NOT DISAGREE ON THE IMPORTANT PLACE OF AGRICULTURE IN THEIR RESPECTIVE ECONOMIES NOR ON THE NECESSITY OF TREATING THE FARMERS WELL, BUT IT SEEMS THAT WHENEVER AMERICAN OFFICIALS RAISE THE SUBJECT OF AGRICULTURE, THERE IS IMMEDIATE ASSUMPTION THAT THE UNITED STATES IS OUT TO DESTROY THE CAP. THIS IS NOT SO. WE UNDERSTAND AND ACCEPT THE NECESSITY FOR A COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY, BUT ASK THAT IT BE ADMINISTERED IN A WAY LESS DAMAGING TO THIRD COUNTRIES. IF LOOKED AT IN A

BUSINESSLIKE AND UNEMOTIONAL WAY, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE TO FIND AREAS WHERE US COMMODITIES COULD BENEFIT WESTERN EUROPE. I WENT ON THE CITE EXAMPLE OF ACHIEVING A BETTER RATION BETWEEN CEREALS AND MEAT PRODUCTION. SOME FRENCH FARMERS ARE RAISING EXPENSIVE WHEAT IN AREAS MORE CON- DUCIVE TO BEEF AND DAIRY CATTLE. WHILE RECOGNIZING THE POLITICAL PROBLEMS POSED, RATIONAL ECONOMIC ARGUMENTS FOR CONVERTING TO ALTERNATIVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION MIGHT BE ACCEPTED OVER TIME. IN ANY EVENT, I STRESSED HOPE THAT OUR EXPERTS COULD DSCUSS THESE MATTERS IN DEPTH IN SMALL GROUPS SO AS TO ARRIVE AT MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL SOLUTIONS WHICH WOULD ENHANCE THE EXPANSION OF INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL TRADE.

5. PRIME MINISTER SAID HE AGREED WITH FOREGOING, BUT OBSERVED IT WAS RARELY POSSIBLE FOR FRANCE' S VIEWS TO BE CONTROLLING IN A COMMUNITY MADE UP OF 9 MEMBERS. FRANCE' S GRAIN PRODUCTION IS EFFICIENT, BUT GERMANY' S IS NOT. WHILE OPPOSING RAISING COMMUNITY GRAIN PRICES, IT IS DIFFICULT FOR FRANCE TO IGNORE THE LEGITIMATE POLITICAL CONCERN OF THER GERMAN GOVERNMENT TO PROTECT ITS FARMERS. FURTHERMORE, MESSMER SAID HE WAS FRANKLY SKEPTICAL OF THE UTILITY OF NEXT FALL' S GATT NEGOTIATIONS. WITH THE FREE WORLD' S MONETARY SYSTEM IN DISARRAY, AND THE CONSEQUENT LACK OF MONETARY STABILITY, WHATEVER CAREFULLY- BALANCED PATTERN OF TARIFF CUTS EMERGES FROM THE TRADE TALKS COULD BE RENDERED MEANINGLESS BY SUBSEQUENT DISLOCATIONS CAUSED BY CURRENCY FLOATS. I REPLIED THAT THIS WAS WHY WE BELIEVED IT WAS EQUALLY IMPORTNAT TO PROCEED WITH FUNDA- MENTAL MONETARY REFORM AND TO HAVE A FORUM ( SUCH AS OECD) IN WHICH WE AND OUR EUROPEAN FRIENDS COULD DISCUSS TRADE AND MONETARY PROBLEMS IN A RELATED CONTEXT.

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6. IN CONCLUDING, I STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO WORKING OUT OUR DIFFERENCES IN SUCH A WAY AS TO AVOID DAMAGING THE POLITICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK OF OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH WESTERN EUROPE, WHICH IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE. THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE AGREED, AND I SAID I LOOKED FORWARD TO FURTHER CONVERSATIONS WITH FROEIGN MINISTER JOBERT AND OTHER MEMBER OF HIS GOVERNMENT. IRWIN

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